

Introduction to the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office



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The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney is established by the Constitution of Virginia.
- ❧ There are 120 elected CAs in Virginia.
- ❧ Some run as independents, others run as the nominee of a party.
- ❧ The term is 4 years. City CAs are on the same cycle as the Governor, county CAs are offset by 2 years.

The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ The duties of the CA include:
 - ❧ Investigating suspected or alleged offenses against the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Alexandria;
 - ❧ Authorizing or declining prosecution of criminal offenses;
 - ❧ Determining the manner of prosecution and deciding trial-related questions;
- ❧ The Code of Virginia grants the Commonwealth's Attorney the discretion to prosecute misdemeanors.
- ❧ **We prosecuteailable misdemeanors.**

The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ As the elected CA, I have a varied job description:
 - ❧ I set policy and goals for the office;
 - ❧ I still prosecute exceptionally serious cases - usually murders;
 - ❧ I have primary responsibility for hiring, promotion and discipline;
 - ❧ I liaise with outside agencies, such as the Sheriff, CMO, APD and Probation;
 - ❧ I routinely teach prosecutors and law enforcement officers;
 - ❧ I am very involved with the state and national prosecutor's associations.

The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ My office currently has 29 full-time employees.
 - ❧ There are 14 prosecutors (authorized) and one Special Assistant for Rehabilitative Programs.
 - ❧ We have 7 administrative staff members.
 - ❧ We have 7 VWAP advocates.
 - ❧ We also rely heavily on law students, who generally work for credit and not for pay. We currently have 3-4 law students volunteering in our office.

The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ All of the assistants carry an active caseload.
- ❧ The newest prosecutors start in misdemeanor court, trying DUIs and Assault and Battery cases.
- ❧ The more senior prosecutors handle murders, rapes and robberies.

The Commonwealth's Attorney



- ❧ In FY 2022, our proposed budget was \$3.285 million, which is down about 2% from the previous year.
- ❧ 97% of our budget is personnel-related.
- ❧ Also, the City is reimbursed by the Commonwealth every year for the state contribution – usually about 45% of our total budget.
- ❧ **The citizens get a full-time office for a part-time price.**

The Commonwealth's Attorney



œ My Philosophy

œ The Role of a Public Prosecutor

- œ Just results – not convictions
- œ Holding people accountable
- œ Rehabilitation

œ Criminal Justice Reform

- œ Diversion
- œ Cash bail
- œ Mental Health Initiative
- œ Treatment Court

œ Results

Questions?

